

REMARKS

Claim 5 is amended to recite that, in this embodiment of the present invention, the fiber is solubilized with alkali at a moisture content from about 10% to about 60% with agitation at speeds of about 300 rpm to about 2,000 rpm in place of the recital that the alkali extraction occurs under these conditions. This amendment to claim 5 rewords the claim consistent with the antecedent language of independent claim 1 and, thus does not add new matter. Moreover, this amendment to claim is supported in the specification, at least at ¶ 5.

Claim 13 is amended to recite that, in this embodiment of the present invention, the peroxide is added when the fiber is solubilized with alkali. This amendment to claim 13 rewords the claim consistent with the antecedent language of independent claim 1 and, thus does not add new matter. Moreover, this amendment to claim is supported in the specification, at least at ¶ 14.

Claim 14 is canceled without prejudice. The applicant reserves his right to claim the subject matter of the canceled claim in a continuation or other patent application.

At page 2 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejects claims 5 and 13 under 35 U.S.C. § 112 (second paragraph) as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which the applicant regards as the invention. Reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

The Examiner asserts that the phrase alkali extraction in claims 5 and 13 lacks antecedent basis because claim 1 does not set forth a process step that

involves alkali extraction. Claims 5 and 13 are amended to recite that the fiber is solubilized with alkali. Claim 1 recites that the caustic liquor is from solubilizing fiber. Claims 5 and 13 concern specific embodiments involving a modification of the solubilization which produces the caustic liquor that is further processed as set forth in the claims. As amended, claims 5 and 13 find antecedent basis in independent claim 1. Accordingly, claims 5 and 13, as amended, comply with the requirements of 35 U.S.C. § 112 (second paragraph).

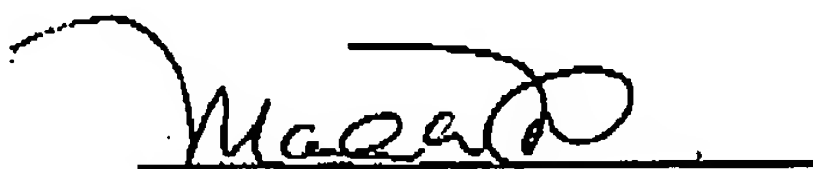
At pages 2-3 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejects claim 14 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 3,935,022 to Sihtola ("Sihtola"). Claim 14 is canceled herein and, accordingly, this claim rejection is moot.

At page 3 of the Office Action, the Examiner states that claims 1, 6-12, 16 and 18 are allowed. The applicant gratefully acknowledges allowance of these claims. Claims 5 and 13, which are dependent from allowed claim 1 have been rewritten and should, as discussed above, also be in condition for allowance. Accordingly, a Notice of Allowance of claims 1, 5-13, 16 and 18 is earnestly solicited. If the Examiner feels that further discussion of claims 5 and 13 is necessary to place the application in condition for allowance, the Examiner is urged to contact the undersigned at (908) 722-0700 so that the application can be placed in condition for allowance without the need for a further Office Action or Appeal.

If any extension of time for this response is required, the applicant requests that this be considered a petition therefor. Please charge any required petition fee to the Deposit Account No. 14-1263.

Please charge any insufficiency of fees, or credit any excess, to the Deposit Account No. 14-1263.

Respectfully submitted,



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